

Anonymous

*La plus mignonne de mon cueur a 3*

Edition and comments by  
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<http://chansonniers.pwch.dk/CH/CH022.html>

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This edition is extracted from the online project *The Copenhagen Chansonnier and the 'Loire Valley' chansonniers*, which consists of linked html-files and a great number of single PDF editions. It can be accessed at <http://chansonniers.pwch.dk/>.

Each html-file about a song contains lists of sources, and edition and translation of the poetic texts, discussion of the main sources and comments on text and music. Separate files hold lists of contents and descriptions of the sources. Other files contain papers and notes on related topics. The online edition offers many cross references and links to online facsimile editions. These links had to be simplified in the present edition.

Each version of a song is regarded as a valid performance by a scribe/musician, and therefore they are published separately. In most cases there will be no attempts to imagine the intentions of the composer or to reconstruct exactly what the composer had written when the music left his pen. Rather the aim is to interpret the written music in largely the same way as 15th century performers may have read it. Many details, which in one source are different from other sources, must be accepted by the editor as valid elements in a performance of the actual source. Sources marked by an asterisk \* are included in the edition.

## Sigla

### *The related 'Loire Valley' chansonniers*

Copenhagen	Copenhagen, The Royal Library, MS Thott 291 8° <a href="http://www.kb.dk/permalink/2006/manus/702/dan/0+recto/">http://www.kb.dk/permalink/2006/manus/702/dan/0+recto/</a>
Dijon	Dijon, Bibliothèque Municipale, Ms. 517 <a href="http://patrimoine.bm-dijon.fr/pleade/img-viewer/MS00517/viewer.html">http://patrimoine.bm-dijon.fr/pleade/img-viewer/MS00517/viewer.html</a>
Laborde	Washington D.C., Library of Congress, MS M2.1 L25 Case (Laborde Chansonnier) <a href="https://www.loc.gov/resource/ihas.200152631.0/?sp=1">https://www.loc.gov/resource/ihas.200152631.0/?sp=1</a>
Leuven	Leuven, Alamire Foundation, Manuscript without shelf number (Leuven Chansonnier) <a href="http://depot.lias.be/delivery/DeliveryManagerServlet?dps_pid=IE9381778">http://depot.lias.be/delivery/DeliveryManagerServlet?dps_pid=IE9381778</a>
Nivelle	Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, Rés. Vmc. ms. 57 (Chansonnier Nivelle de la Chaussée) <a href="http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b55007270r/f1.image">http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b55007270r/f1.image</a>
Wolfenbüttel	Wolfenbüttel, Herzog August Bibliothek, Codex Guelf. 287 Extravag. <a href="http://diglib.hab.de/wdb.php?dir=mss/287-extrav">http://diglib.hab.de/wdb.php?dir=mss/287-extrav</a>

### *Other sources*

Bologna Q16	Bologna, Civico Museo Bibliografico Musicale, MS Q16
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### *Text sources*

Berlin 78.B.17	Berlin, Staatsliche Museen der Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Kupferstichkabinett, Ms. 78.B.17 (Chansonnier Rohan)
London 380	London, BritishLibrary, MS Lansdowne 380
Jardin 1501	<i>Le Jardin de plaisance et fleur de rethorique</i> , Paris, [Antoine Verard, 1501]

### *Literature*

Löpelmann 1923	M. Löpelmann (ed.), <i>Die Liederhandschrift des Cardinals de Rohan</i> (Gesellschaft für romanische Litteratur, Band 44) Göttingen 1923
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## *La plus mignonne de mon cuer* 3v · Anonymous

*Appearance in the group of related chansonniers:*

\*Copenhagen f. 27 »La plus« 2v [3v] (Only T and C)

\*Dijon ff. 105v-106 »La plus mignonne de mon cuer« 3v

*Other musical sources:*

Bologna Q16 ff. 83v-84 »La plus mignonne de mon cuer« 3v

*Text:* Rondeau quatrain; full text in Dijon, and in Du Fay's setting in Nivelles and Wolfenbüttel; also found in Berlin 78.B.17 f. 97v (no. 202), ed.: Löpelmann 1923, p. 156, London 380 f. 246, Jardin 1501 f. 67 (no. 59).

After Dijon:

La plus mignonne de mon cuer,  
je m'esbais, dont ce me vient  
que sans cesser il me souvient  
de vostre beauté et doulceur.

Des bonnes estes la meilleur,  
puisque dire le vous convient,

la plus mignonne *de mon cuer*,  
*je m'esbais, dont ce me vient.*

Quant j'ay desplaisir ou doulceur  
aucune fois, comme il s'en vient,  
je ne sçay que cela devient  
pensant a vostre grant doulceur.

La plus mignonne *de mon cuer*,  
*je m'esbais, dont ce me vient*  
*que sans cesser il me souvient*  
*de vostre beauté et doulceur.*

Most darling of my heart,  
I am astonished how it happens  
that without cease I am reminded  
of your beauty and sweetness.

Of the good you are the best,  
since it is fitting to tell you so,

most darling of my heart,  
I am astonished how it happens.

When I feel grief or pain  
sometimes, as it occurs,  
I do not know what this will turn into  
when I think of your great sweetness.

Most darling of my heart,  
I am astonished how it happens  
that without cease I am reminded  
of your beauty and sweetness.

This poem is also in Nivelles and Wolfenbüttel in the setting by Guillaume Du Fay.

*Evaluation of the sources:*

This is probably the least successful entry the Dijon scribe made in the Copenhagen chansonnier. Otherwise the general impression is that this MS contains a carefully selected repertory and that the scribe here lets his practical experience of the music influence his judgment of what to put on the pages. In this case he probably had no idea what went on in the music. If we may assume that the missing upper voice in Copenhagen was identical to the corresponding voice in Dijon – as the tenor and contratenor both are – he produced two nearly faultless copies of an exemplar, and it is very likely that he did them on the same day. He probably did not know the music and he obviously did not try to imagine the voices as a sound picture. As it stands in the Dijon chansonnier the chanson is not performable. Some of the errors, which most probable stem from his exemplar, is indeed easy to detect, while others only can be sorted out by referring to the version in the Italian manuscript dated 1487, Bologna, Civico Museo Bibliografico Musicale, Ms. Q16.

Among the easy detectable errors are the wrong clefs in the contratenor parts of both Copenhagen and Dijon. One quickly realizes that it should be F-clefs instead of C-clefs, but the scribe carefully copied them including the adjustment of the lower flat to its correct position according to the C-clef.

If we disregard the wrong clef, the chanson is still in places quite dissonant or incompetent in the MSS (see for example bb. 4, 16-17, 24-25, or 31). It seems impossible that the scribe ever judged the voice parts together. Or, if he did, it was too late to do anything about it. A repair would demand a lot of work, and the music probably was not worth the effort.

One begins to get a suspicion that this chanson was not what the scribe really wanted to add to his two collections of chansons. Maybe more likely his target was Du Fay's charming setting of the same poem.<sup>1</sup> The text may have caught his eye, and as a result the song was incorporated in the two collections so to say unheard, but accurately and professionally copied from the exemplar on hand.

*Comments on text and music:*

In comparison to Du Fay's setting of the same slight, but rather alluring love poem in rich, nearly *équivoques* rimes, this rondeau is unattractive and boring. It is quite old-fashioned with octave imitations in the superius-tenor duet as the contrasting element in the second part of the rondeau (bb. 20 ff). As a two-part composition this duet is tolerable (the passages bb. 12-14 or 36-39 could be made to work better in this format), but with the contratenor added the composition is close on inept. The contratenor alternates between a position below and above the tenor and it is characterised by leaps and aimless movement with clumsily disguised parallel fifths and octaves (bb. 5-6 or 36-37).

In fact, the most interesting thing about this chanson is the question of how it got to be corrupted in the Dijon scribe's exemplar. It could be a candidate for a piece, which started life in writing without letter clefs, as one of the rare pieces in so-called 'clefless' notation.<sup>2</sup> If we look at the version in the Bologna MS, which unlike the Copenhagen/Dijon version can be performed, it is easy to imagine how the music could present itself in 'clefless' notation (*fig. 1*) with a lot of b-flats as *fa*-signs. This does not indicate a performance at any fixed pitch as long as the structure demanded by the *fa*-signs is maintained, but the structure can be read in different ways by imagining letter clefs.

An obvious choice is shown in the next set of incipits (*fig. 2*), and this is exactly as it appears in Bologna Q16, but it could just as well be perceived as in the third figure, a fifth higher with only one flat. The corrupt version in Copenhagen/Dijon could simply be a conflation of the two readings, but of course this does not account for all the other errors. Obviously it can also be read without any flats in the signature (*fig. 4*), but this produces an extremely low pitch.

1 At <http://chansonniers.pwch.dk/CH/CH034.html>.

2 See further my description in 'On chansons notated in *fa*-clefs' at <http://chansonniers.pwch.dk/NOTES/ChansonsFaclefs.html>



Figure 1

Figure 2  
(Bologna Q16)

Figure 3

(Figure 4)

## Copenhagen no. 22

Copenhagen, The Royal Library, MS Thott 291 8°, f. 27<sup>1)</sup>

*La plus mignonne de mon coeur* [Anonymous]

## Dijon no. 87

Dijon, Bibliothèque Municipale, MS 517, ff. 105<sup>v</sup>-106

[Superius]      Mensura =  $\text{c} / \text{d}$

1. 4. La plus mi - gnon - ne de mon  
3. Quant j'ay des - plai - sir ou dou -

Tenor

2) 1. 4. La plus mi - gnon - ne de mon  
3. Quant j'ay des - plai - sir ou dou -

Contratenor

3) 1. 4. La plus mi - gnon - ne de mon  
3. Quant j'ay des - plai - sir ou dou -

9

cœur, je m'es - ba - is dont ce me  
leur au - cu - ne fois, com - me il s'en -

6)

cœur, je m'es - ba - is dont ce me  
leur au - cu - ne fois, com - me il s'en -

18

vient que sans ces - ser  
vient, je ne sçais que

7)

vient que sans ces - ser  
vient, je ne sçais que

- 1) Copenhagen: *Tenor* and *Contratenor* only; the preceding folio containing the superius is missing.  
2) Copenhagen: The mensuration sign in the tenor is *tempus imperfectum* (error), and the tenor is supplied with two flats; in Dijon the second flat appears from the second staff (bb. 18 ff).  
3) Copenhagen and Dijon: The clef in the contratenor (C4) is wrong (error). Has to be F4 according to MS Bologna Q16.

- 4) Dijon: *Superius*, bar 5-6.1, the ligature is a *semibrevis* and a dotted *semibrevis*, which probably is an error; changed in accordance with MS Bologna Q16.  
5) Copenhagen and Dijon: *Contratenor*, bar 6.2, the second *minima* is *e-flat* (error); changed in accordance with MS Bologna Q16.  
6) Copenhagen and Dijon: *Tenor*, bars 16.2-17 are three *semibreves* (error); changed in accordance with MS Bologna Q16.  
7) Dijon: *Superius*, bars 24.2-25.1 is *a'-g'* (error); changed in accordance with MS Bologna Q16.

25

il me sou - vient de vos - tre beau -  
ce - la de - vient pen - sant a vos -

il - me la sou - vient de vos - tre  
ce - - - la de - vient pen - sant a

il - me la sou - vient de vos -  
ce - me la sou - vient de vos -  
ce - la sou - vient de vos -  
ce - la sou - vient de vos -

33

té tre et  
tre grant

beau - té et  
vos - tre grant

- - - tre beau - té et  
a vos - - - tre grant

42

doul - leur.  
doul - leur.

doul - leur.  
doul - leur.

doul - leur.  
doul - leur.

1) Dijon, *Superius*, bars 26.2-27.1, the *c*" is spit into a *semibrevis* and a *minima* caused by a change of staff. The adjustment is in accordance with MS Bologna Q16.

2) Copenhagen and Dijon: *Contratenor*, bar 31 is *c-B* (error); changed in accordance with MS Bologna Q16.

1

2a. Des bon - nes es - tes la mil  
2b. la plus mi - gnon - ne de mon

8

2a. Des bon - nes es - tes la mil  
2b. la plus mi - gnon - ne de mon

2a. Des bon - nes es - tes la mil  
2b. la plus mi - gnon - ne de mon

9

leur, puis - que di - re le vous con - vient,  
cœur, je m'es - ba - is dont ce me vient.

8

leur, puis - que di - re le vous con - vient,  
cœur, je m'es - ba - is dont ce me vient.

leur, puis - que di - re le vous con - vient,  
cœur, je m'es - ba - is dont ce me vient.